1338

SUBSTANCE

OF THE

SPEECH

OF THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE

LORD SHEFFIELD,

Monday, April 22, 1799.

UPON THE SUBJECT OF

UNION WITH IRELAND.

K. Holroyd (J.B.)

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&c. &c.

THE Chancellor of the Exchequer moved the order of the day for taking into conſideration the Addreſs from the Lords upon the ſubject of the Union with Ireland; which being read, he moved that the ſaid Addreſs be now taken into conſideration.

The Addreſs was then read twice, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer moved, That this Houſe do concur with the ſaid Addreſs.

Lord SHEFFIELD ſpoke as follows:

Mr. Speaker,

Sir, I wiſh it to be underſtood, that I ſupport the reſolutions and addreſs, in confidence that the aſſurance given by a noble Lord in an official ſituation in Ireland will be ſtrictly obſerved, namely, that Miniſters will *look to the ſenſe of Parliament and of the Country*, before the meaſure of Union ſhall again be brought forward there; and that aſſurance being given, I am not ſenſible of any ſufficient argument that ſhould prevent the Britiſh Parliament from giving ſome general explanation of the arrangement it is diſpoſed to make, more eſpecially

as I obſerve that ſcarcely any man in this country objects to the principle of the meaſure; nor can I ſuppoſe, that a nation ſo well informed and ſo much accuſtomed to political conſiderations as the Iriſh, ſhould for a long time perſevere in refuſing to receive or examine what may be propoſed from the Britiſh Parliament; and for theſe reaſons I wiſh to trouble the Houſe with a few obſervations.

We cannot be much ſurprized at the alarm which has taken place in Ireland. The word Union was ſuffered to be banded about there for many months without the ſlighteſt attempt on the part of the Miniſters to explain the terms of it. The aid of deſigning men, and of thoſe prejudiced from partial and local conſiderations, was ſcarcely neceſſary to take advantage of this circumſtance: the apprehenſions of Ireland

had always been, that an equal and favourable Union would not be granted: and no ſmall part of that people were made to believe, that their liberty, their independance, their dignity, and almoſt the exiſtence of the nation, would be done away by their becoming one and the ſame with the moſt independant and moſt reſpectable nation in the world.

But, in truth, the meaſure of Union was ill-prepared for Ireland, and Ireland was ill-prepared for Union. It is not without competent information that I am convinced, if the outline of the liberal propoſition for Union, which is now offered, had been at firſt properly communicated and with all the plainneſs and candour which ſuit the Iriſh character, it would have been very differently received; and it is not my opinion alone, but the opinion alſo of thoſe

who are not friendly to the meaſure, that it might have been accepted, at leaſt it would have prevented all that miſrepreſentation and miſapprehenſion which might well be expected, without ſome previous attention. I can hardly imagine a caſe, in reſpect to which, until underſtood, more jealouſy was likely to be entertained than this of a legiſlative Union; otherwiſe the meaſure being really ſo neceſſary and ſo advantageous to Ireland, the ſtrange abuſe of the words "Dignity and Independance," which have been ſo entirely miſtaken there, would have made little impreſſion. I can ſuppoſe it will be unpleaſing at firſt to acknowledge, that the premature oppoſition was the reſult of an ill-founded jealouſy. Yet that acknowledgment, and the conſequent departure from an *haſty* oppoſition to the meaſure, is no more than may be fairly expected from the candid openneſs of the Iriſh character.

It is not now the queſtion whether the meaſure has been brought forward and conducted as it ſhould have been, but whether the Britiſh Parliament ſhould do what depends on it to obviate the miſchief which muſt ariſe from independent and ſeparate Legiſlatures exiſting within the ſame empire, whether we ſhould relinquiſh a meaſure which ſeems neceſſary to the general ſecurity and welfare, or take the preſent opportunity of ſtating the outline of it.

I ſhall not trouble the Houſe with a repetition of hiſtorical inquiry into the cauſes of the preſent ſtate of Ireland, nor with many references to the reports of the Lords and Commons of that kingdom. The cauſes and the proofs are but too plain. The notoriety of numberleſs melancholy facts, which demonſtrate the wretched and dangerous condition of that country, with reaſon

alarms every thinking man: it is an unanimous opinion in this country, that ſomething is neceſſary to be done to preſerve Ireland; and there ſeems to be almoſt a general conviction, that it can be done only by a legiſlative Union.

For my part, I cannot ſee the meaſure in any other light than that of being abſolutely neceſſary. It has long been my opinion, and every thing which has happened *in* Ireland, and in reſpect to Ireland durin the laſt twenty years, particularly that which took place in 1782, and was whimſically enough called "Final Adjuſtment," have convinced me of that neceſſity.

When it was found proper to take off the ſhackles from the Iriſh Parliament, and highly proper it was, a Union ſhould have been propoſed, and by the ſame meaſure

only ſhould all the commercial and other advantages have been communicated, which were ſo indiſcriminately conceded without terms ſince 1778. It would have been ſtill better, if an Union had taken place in the beginning of the century, and that the Conſtitution and Commerce of Great Britain, which had been ſo long and ſo invidiouſly withheld, had been then communicated to Ireland. But in 1782, the adminiſtration of that day, without ſupplying any means of keeping theſe kingdoms together, raſhly gave away the dependance of the two iſlands on each other; and now there is no certainty in the connexion of Great Britain and Ireland. Independance of Legiſlature ſeems to have ſuggeſted notions of ſeparation, which appeared, in ſome degree, as early as 1784. However, even thoſe who attempt to juſtify what was done in 1782, muſt acknowledge, that

there were points of eſſential conſequence left unſettled, and that it ſhould not have been poſtponed to the hour of difficulty and diſtreſs to arrange and aſcertain the relative exertions and political connexions of the two countries.

Much has been ſaid on the words "Final Adjuſtment:" but that which is ſo called, only referred to the then aſſerted independence of Parliament, and by no means precluded Union: on the contrary, it was the opinion at the time, that *farther* meaſures were neceſſary to eſtabliſh a connexion on a ſolid permanent baſis: and ſo far as I underſtand what was intended, I conſider *that* adjuſtment as putting the Iriſh Parliament on the footing of independence and free deliberation, and in that ſituation alone which could ſatisfy the people of Ireland, that the acts of their

Parliament would be thenceforward free and uncontrouled; but at any rate it is trifling to ſuppoſe, that nothing more was to be attempted, if that which had been done had not the effect of preſerving the connexion and attachment of the two countries. It is true that Union became more neceſſary, as well as more difficult, in conſequence of what was done in 1782, and alſo in 1793, when the principle of our navigation and colonial laws were, without terms or occaſion, ſacrificed by the act which permits goods and commodities of the growth, production, or manufacture, of Aſia, Africa, or America, to be imported from Ireland into Great Britain. All theſe benefits ſhould have been reſerved as the means of Union, but being then unconditionally granted, they have rendered that meaſure much leſs ſought for by Ireland; and I confeſs that the ſtrongeſt objection I felt to the propo-

ſitions that were brought forward in the Britiſh Parliament in 1785, (which by no means would have done what it is neceſſary to do,) aroſe from the apprehenſion, that if carried, they might prevent an Union. It was obvious, that if all the reſerved advantages of Great Britain were to be given up, there would be no means of future negotiation remaining.

Previouſly to that period, Ireland would have petitioned for an Union, and I think ſhe might well do ſo now, as the greateſt poſſible acquiſition ſhe could make; but neither the adjuſtment in queſtion, nor all the commercial conceſſions, nor other means employed to tranquillize that country, have had the leaſt effect. The bad ſtate of Ireland yearly became worſe. It appears the parties are not to be ſatisfied; that no melioration of the condition of

Ireland has taken place; that a great proportion of the people is now as ill diſpoſed to Government, as bigoted, as ignorant, and as uncivilized as they were at the time of the maſſacre in 1641. At preſent the permanency of the connexion of Great Britain with Ireland depends on the parties which exiſt, and ever muſt exiſt, in a nation of Proteſtants and Roman Catholics ſo peculiarly intereſted againſt, and politically hoſtile to, each other. Theſe diviſions are the bane of the country, never to be annihilated but by a legiſlative Union. The whole preſent ſyſtem is bad. The change of Government, at leaſt every four years, and the conceſſions ſo regularly made under the vain notion of ſatisfying the people, create and promote ſchemes and ſuggeſtions inconſiſtent with the tranquillity of the country, and encourage

agitators, whoſe uniform object it is, to diſturb the public mind.

I have obſerved, that independence of Parliament ſuggeſted the idea of ſeparation. Irrational notions of independence, leading to diſſolution of Government, muſt end in civil war and the introduction of the French. Manufactures and agriculture would then ceaſe much more ſuddenly than they could poſſibly revive; and whatever might be the event, Ireland would be completely ruined, and England greatly diſtreſſed. But ſuppoſing the criſis in queſtion ſhould not immediately come on, Ireland would continue in its preſent diſturbed ſtate, and England would ever find Ireland the back-door to conſpiracy, rebellion, and invaſion. And ſo miſerably diſtracted is Ireland at preſent, that among three millions of Roman Catholics, and

half a million of Diſſenters, there is ſcarcely a man capable of a political idea, who does not wiſh for ſomething different from that which is; namely, a Change of the Church Eſtabliſhment, the Abolition of Tithes, a Parliamentary Reform, or a Republic: nor are the members of the eſtabliſhed Church entirely free from the ſame unhappy temper of mind. The common Enemies of mankind will not fail to take advantage of this ſtate of things: they have raiſed it into a dangerous and formidable conſpiracy, and it ſeems the only means through which they can hope of ſucceeding in their favourite plan of deſtroying the Britiſh empire.

Nothing can be more dangerous than a notion, that a coalition of Churchmen, Diſſenters, and Catholics, for the purpoſe of ſeparation, cannot take place.

The reports of the Lords and Commons of Ireland, and what has happened lately, completely prove, that ſuch a coalition is not merely poſſible, but that it actually exiſts, and that the foundations of it are laid, and deeply laid, already.

This ſubject has been ſo fully and ſo ably diſcuſſed, that it is not neceſſary to ſtate how general, how great, and how irremediable by common means, are the miſchief and danger: the unexampled perilous ſtate of Ireland is well known: it was therefore evidently the duty of his Majeſty's Miniſters to bring forward ſome meaſure to prevent even the poſſibility of ſo great a calamity as the ſeparation of the two countries; and however I may differ in opinion with His Majeſty's Miniſters in reſpect to the conduct of this buſineſs, I acknowledge great merit in

their undertaking ſuch an arduous taſk at a time they were ſo fully engaged in the moſt momentous concerns, and they have not ſhrunk from the difficulties which obviouſly might preſent themſelves, and which too often induce Miniſters to adopt ſome temporary expedient (juſt to ſerve their turn) which never effectually ſucceeds, but in the end produces greater difficulty and much miſchief. It ſeems alſo highly incumbent on the Britiſh Parliament to take early the moſt effectual ſteps to promote the proper remedy: and every thing has been tried, except that which is now obviouſly the beſt and only means, an Union, and which, in conſequence of the wild opinions that are abroad, and the diſturbed ſtate of the world, has become ſtill more neceſſary. Every conceſſion has been made, many colonial and commercial advantages, which Ireland could not on

any reaſonable ground claim without an Union, have been communicated to her: in ſhort, every thing has been granted ſo far, that we are now told by the enemies of Union, Ireland cannot acquire more by that meaſure, and that ſhe does not deſire greater freedom and extenſion of trade, than ſhe at preſent poſſeſſes, preferring her independence and dignity as a nation. They ſurely have odd notions of independence and dignity, who prefer holding almoſt the whole of their trade, almoſt their exiſtence, at the diſcretion of another country, rather than by *right* as a part of that country.

But I ſhould not do juſtice if I did not acknowledge this way of thinking is by no means general, and that the two largeſt counties, Cork and Galway, and the city of Cork, county of Clare, and other diſtricts of Ireland, had expreſſed the con-

trary, and ſo well, that I wiſh to make uſe of their own words. Speaking of Union, the county of Cork ſays:

County of Cork. } We are firmly perſuaded it would add to the welfare, the credit, and the immediate proſperity of Ireland, and that by the uniting our ſtrength in the cloſeſt manner with the moſt free, and moſt happy people on earth, we ſhould exert the boſt poſſible means in our power for preſerving the ſafety. the honour, and the ſecurity of our deareſt rights. Determined, therefore, as we are to ſtand or fall with Great Britain, we look forward with the greateſt anxiety to this connexion, as the moſt effectual means of putting an end to all our factions and religious animoſities, and of reconciling the people of Ireland to each other, by doing away all ill-founded jealouſies between fellow-ſubjects.

We conſider it as moſt obviouſly and indiſpenſably neceſſary to the proſperity of this kingdom in general, and to the reſtoration of that tranquillity and induſtry, which alone can render the inhabitant proſperous and happy, and moſt likely in its conſequences to reclaim the deluded people, from thoſe habits of violence and outrage, to a ſenſe of their duty to the laws of their country, and the beſt of Kings.

City of Cork. { To become a conſtituent part of that empire, to whoſe protection we owe our political exiſtence, and whoſe Conſtitution is the admiration of the civilized world: to participate in thoſe reſources, which are inexhauſtible: to become joint

proprietors of that navy, which is irreſiſtible, and to ſhare in that commerce which knows no bounds, are objects beyond which our moſt ſanguine wiſhes for the proſperity of Ireland cannot poſſibly extend: while the proſpect, which they hold forth of terminating the jarring intereſts of party, and reconciling the jealous diſtinctions of religion, promiſes, a reſtoration of that tranquillity to which this country has been too long a ſtranger.

County of Galway. { We are perſuaded, that a legiſlative Union with Great Britain, eſtabliſhed on terms of perfect equality, would invigorate the reſources, increaſe the wealth, and add materially to the ſecurity of both countries, enabling them to oppoſe ;heir common enemy with increaſed ſtrength and power, and moſt effectually to defeat their object of dividing the empire for the purpoſe of ſubduing it. To conſider this meaſure as it affects either country ſeparately, we conceive to be a narrow view of its object: but even in that confined ſenſe of it, we are firmly convinced it would add to the welfare, the credit, and the immediate proſperity of Ireland; and we are of opinion, that uniting our ſtrength in the cloſeſt manner with the wiſeſt, the freeſt, and the happieſt people upon earth, with whom we muſt neceſſarily ſtand or fall, is ſo far from a ſacrifice of the honour and independence of Ireland, that it is the beſt means left to us for preſerving both.

Theſe addreſſes are moſt reſpectably ſigned; and a third addreſs from the

county of Cork, nearly in the ſame words, has the ſignature of 373 of the principal Nobility, Biſhops, Magiſtrates, Clergy, and perſons of property, both Proteſtants and Catholics: and there is reaſon to believe, that the ſentiments therein expreſſed are much more general in the ſeveral counties which have not addreſſed, than has been ſuppoſed.

Although Ireland has acquired much which ſhould only have been conceded by Union, it is not true that ſhe cannot obtain farther commercial advantages by that meaſure. The beſt market, that of Great Britain, for all Iriſh manufactures, is ſtill reſerved, except linens, and her linens are become one of the greateſt manufactures in the world, entirely in conſequence of having that market, and could never have been carried on to its preſent great extent,

unleſs aided by the prompt payment of Great Britain, which in a great degree acts as a ſupply of capital *.

Six parts in ſeven of the whole exports of linen from Ireland are imported into Great Britain, and of the ſeventh part the

* The bounties on the export of Iriſh linens from hence at the ſame time that they give to Great Britain about an eight of the trade in thoſe articles, encourage the manufacture in Ireland. The average of bouties on the export of linens for the laſt four years is nearly 34,700l.

Iriſh linens exported from Great Britain	Yards
on an average of the laſt four years, entitled to bounty	4,866,015
Ditto not entitled to bounty	964,507
Total of Iriſh linens exported from Great Britain	5,830,522

The duties laid on the import of foreign linens for the purpoſe of protecting the Britiſh linen manufacture are about 25 per cent. of their real value, and give almoſt the monopoly of the Britiſh market to many articles of the Iriſh linen manufacture. The duties paid on foreign linen uſed in this country, on the ſame average, amount to 115,000. If the ſame rate of duties had been laid on Iriſh linens imported and uſed in this iſland under the uſual policy of protecting the Britiſh manufacture, as is done in all like caſes, it would raiſe a revenue of about 650,000l.

greateſt proportion goes to America, including the Weſt Indies. On an average of four years, ending the 25th of March 1798,

	Yards
were exported from Ireland	39,885,776
of which to Great Britain -	33,695,659
To the Britiſh Colonies in America and Iſlands in the Weſt Indies * - - - - -	1,285,998
To the States of America - -	4,012,519
To foreign parts of Europe and to Africa - - - - - -	891,530,

being about a 44th part of the whole export of Linens from Ireland.

Linens are the only Iriſh manufacture, properly ſo called, which has the advantage of the Britiſh market, and it has flouriſhed accordingly. No manufacture, no trade of Ireland, except ſuch as are duty

* In this are not included Iriſh linens exported from Great Britain to the Britiſh Colonies and to the American States, but only the quantities ſent directly from Ireland to the places mentioned.

free, or have particular advantages in the Britiſh market, have ſucceeded. Linens, corn, and the produce of cattle, which alone have thoſe advantages, amount on an average of the laſt three years to 5,410,825
when the total value of all Iriſh imports into Great Britain were 5,612,689
of which there were articles not the manufacture and produce of Ireland to the amount of - - - - - - - - - 101,864

So that the articles of Iriſh growth or manufacture, which are not duty free, or have no particular exemption or advantage in Britiſh ports, amount only to - - - - - - - 100,781
and form a ſmall proportion, indeed, of the great importation from Ireland into Great Britain alone amounting to 5,612,689, which, ſtated in the manner moſt favourable to Ireland, is, at leaſt, ſix parts in ſeven

of the whole export trade of Ireland to all parts.

We cannot be ſurprized, that woollen and other manufactures have decreaſed in Ireland during the late turbulent ſtate of that country. We may rather wonder, that they have not been more affected: but ſuch articles as have the peculiar advantage of the Britiſh market, have even lately increaſed. The manufactures and commerce of Ireland are now, and have always been, greatly inferior to what they may be; it is reaſonable therefore to ſuppoſe, that when the preſent prohibitory duties which were laid on manufactures coming from all parts to protect thoſe of England, are, in reſpect to Iriſh manufactures, equalized, as intended by the articles of Union, and they ſhall have the advantage of the Britiſh market the ſame as linens; the produce of cattle and corn, they may alſo flouriſh.

No country is better circumſtanced for manufactures than Ireland. She has plenty of water and fuel*, the firſt requiſites in

* Moſt parts of Ireland, where, through want of ſkill and wealth, coals have not yet been raiſed, particularly the manufacturing diſtricts, are acceſſible by water and near the coaſts of England and Wales, which abound in coals. Ireland may have that article cheaper from the Weſt and North-Weſt of England and from Wales, than it can go coaſtwiſe to many places in Great Britain where great manufactories are carried on which conſume large quantities of that article. Coals from Great Britain to Ireland pay only an export duty of 14d. per chaldron, when the ſame article carried coaſtwiſe to London pays a duty of 9s. 3d. per chaldron, and to any other part of England 5s. 9d. If Ireland does not think it neceſſary to protect her own collieries by any import duty, ſhe may cheapen the price of coals to her manufacturers by taking off the duty of 1s. 9½d. per ton on the import of that article into Dublin, and of 9½d. into all other parts of Ireland. The paſſage from the Engliſh collieries is ſhort, and the freight is moderate. And it may be obſerved, that inferior ſorts of coal anſwer the purpoſe of manufacture, and that the bogs of Ireland furniſh plenty of excellent peat or turf.

manufactures. The encouragement to her induſtry will be great, eſpecially as it will be impoſſible to countervail the difference of price of labour and of exciſes in the two countries*, and commercial men will acknowledge the ſuperior advantage of a near market, and a quick return, ſo abſolutely neceſſary to a country wanting capital.

If Union ſhould take place, there will be no jealouſy, no warfare of bounties and drawbacks, no invidious wiſh to check the proſperity of Ireland, or any manufacture there, and the great commercial advantages of Ireland will no longer be held at the pleaſure of another country.

* Import duties in the two countries may be equalized, or the difference of thoſe duties on raw materials may be paid on import of the article or manufacture, of which it is made.

The proſperity of Ireland, ſuch as it is, in no degree aroſe from the independency of the Iriſh Parliament, but from commercial advantages derived from Great-Britain. I heſitated when I firſt heard that a contrary aſſertion came from a man as able, as reſpectable, and, at leaſt, as well informed, as any in the two iſlands; but the aſſertion that the proſperity of Ireland aroſe from the independence of her Parliament, appears to me ſo entirely unſupported by fact, that I ſcarcely know how to reaſon about it, except by aſking, whether the increaſe of the linen manufacture; whether the proſperity of the beef, pork, and butter-trade; whether the growth of a grain of corn, or of a blade of graſs; whether the opening of the ports of Great Britain to Iriſh corn at a lower price than from other countries, have been effected by the independence of the Iriſh Parliament: in ſhort, which article

of growth or export has increaſed in conſequence of it? Have the laws been better executed? Has the country been more tranquil? Are life and property more ſafe? In truth, I can trace little to that event but the preſent diſturbed ſtate of Ireland. I repeat, that the proſperity of Ireland entirely depends on the connexion with and advantages derived from Great Britain, without which her trade would be almoſt nothing; and this appears ſo perfectly evident, that I conſider it not to be neceſſary to add a ſyllable more to prove it.

When Ireland has acquired the Britiſh Conſtitution, a due execution of laws and tranquillity, and that life and property are ſecure there, Engliſh capitals will undoubtedly be employed in Ireland, and her proſperity will be real and permanent.

At preſent no prudent man will lend one ſhilling to that country in any ſhape, far leſs will a commercial or manufacturing man riſk his capital in any ſpeculation, where a ſpirit of unfriendly independence, of ſeparation and of rebellion ſo ſtrongly prevails; but ſurely it is not commercial advantage and wealth only that are wanting to Ireland. She is deficient in the moſt eſſential of all things, good order and well-executed laws. Life and property are not more ſecure there, than among the moſt diſturbed people upon earth. A reſidence there is as much to be avoided as in countries ſubject to the moſt hideous tyranny or ſavage banditti.

It is curious, eſpecially at this time, that apprehenſions are expreſſed that the number of abſentees will be greatly increaſed by an Union. There are now infinitely a greater number of Iriſh emigrants, for the

ſake of perſonal ſafety, than will be occaſioned if Union ſhould be adopted. If that meaſure ſhould take place, few families will follow thoſe who are called to Parliament: if they make the experiment, the difference of expence will ſoon check the evil: and thoſe that occaſionally become abſentees, will be ſo by choice, not by compulſion.

It will not be improper in this place to ſtate, with the view of removing wrong impreſſions, that the number and property of abſentees have been always greatly exaggerated, and alſo the bad effects of the conſequent drain of money.

Thoſe who are moſt capable of examining the queſtion agree, that the remittance to regular abſentees is below 600,000l., I believe conſiderably, which is not more than one fifth of the value of the exports of

linens alone to this country, amounting to, at leaſt, three millions. According to the common valuation, it may not always appear ſo much, becauſe they are rated, at moſt, at 1s. 6d. per yard, even now that their quality is much improved; but if valued at only 19d., linen and linen yarn will, on an average of the laſt three years, amount to a larger ſum than I have mentioned, and more than balance all the imports of Great Britain; including raw materials, as well as remittances to abſentees. The imports of the products and manufacture of Ireland into Great Britain on an average of the laſt three years, being - - - - - - - - - 5,510,825

and all imports of the produce or manufacture of Great Britain into Ireland - - - - - 2,087,672

3,425,153

So that there is a balance of upwards of 2,800,000 l. in favour of Ireland, allowing an actual remittance of 600,000 l. to abſentees.

The above is the ſtatement of the interchange of produce and manufacture. Beſides which, Ireland imports from Great Britain at preſent, in conſequence of her being obliged to avail herſelf of Britiſh capital, and of her limited commerce, except with Great Britain,

Of colonial articles - - -	970,000
Of foreign merchandize - -	498,173
	1,468,173
And England receives from Ireland of colonial and foreign merchandize - - -	101,874
which gives a balance to England on foreign and colonial importation of - - - -	1,366,309

and if deducted from the above balance of

2,800,000, will ſtill on the whole, ſtating the trade and remittances in the moſt favourable manner for Ireland, leave a balance of 1,433,691l. in favour of the latter country.

It ſhould be obſerved, that while the imports of the produce and manufacture of Ireland into Great Britain are in a progreſſive ſtate of certain increaſe, on the other hand, the imports of foreign and colonial articles from Great Britain into Ireland are in a courſe of decreaſe; but I proceed to conſiderations of more conſequence to both countries.

I am little diſpoſed to argue in favour of non-reſidence, but I muſt obſerve, that thoſe parts of Ireland, as well as of England, where manufactures flouriſh, are remarkable for the non-reſidence of land-proprietors. Yet, in general, I conſider

their abſence as the greateſt misfortune, and I conceive one of the moſt eſſential advantages of England over Ireland ariſes from the reſidence of that claſs of men, and from their great attention to the people, and to all the details of the country round them. To another circumſtance very different from the cuſtom of England, much of the unimproved ſtate of Ireland may be attributed. The intermediate man, a perſon between the owner and occupier, who holds land from the reſident as well as from the abſentee, has no permanent intereſt in the improvement of it. His income depends on the exaction of the utmoſt that can be got from an under tenant. But we cannot be ſurprized, that men of fortune in Ireland ſhould now reſide in villas near the metropolis, or abſent themſelves, when we recollect the uncivilized ſtate of the country. At preſent it cannot be expected from them, nor is it ſafe; and

unleſs ſome great change ſhould happen, which will induce and enable men of fortune to live there, and to inſtruct, protect, and encourage the people, civilization will go on very ſlowly.

All the ſame objections which are urged in Ireland againſt an Union, were made by Scotland at the time of her Union with England, and every miſchief was predicted; but they all proved unfounded. Arguments, which came from ſome of the ableſt men of thoſe times, and which then appeared almoſt concluſive, are completely refuted by experience. It was ſaid, that Edinburgh would be deſerted and ruined: the ſame is now ſaid of Dublin: but ſince Union, the ſize of Edinburgh, and the number of her inhabitants, have been more than doubled, and the city beautified in a high degree. All Scotland is greatly improved, her population increaſed, ſhe is

ten times more rich ſince that period: her people are civilized, the laws are now executed, life and property are ſecure; the Legiſlatures of the two kingdoms no longer at variance as heretofore, and at the riſk of rupture each counteracting the other. Few families of property are now conſtantly abſentees; and almoſt without exception, thoſe Scotchmen, who go from home and acquire a fortune, in the end carry it to Scotland. Before the Union, Scotland had ſcarcely any thing worthy the name of a manufacture: all her efforts to obtain a foreign or colonial trade had failed, but now her manufactures and trade are as great in proportion as thoſe of England. And all theſe advantages are greatly beyond the progreſſive improvement which would have taken place without an Union, and without which many of them never could have taken place.

The alarm in the city of Dublin on the ſubject of Union is ſaid to be greater and more juſt than elſewhere, but I am perfectly ſatisfied that her apprehenſions are unfounded. The abſence of 80 Commoners and 30 Lords, even ſuppoſing them conſtantly reſident before, certainly cannot ruin Dublin. The Lord Lieutenant, the principal officers of every kind, the Courts of Juſtice will ſtill remain. She will ſtill continue the Winter reſidence of the principal people of fortune, as Edinburgh does. She will be the ſeat of education, of amuſement, and of the arts. Her trade will increaſe greatly. The complete intercourſe and exchange of commodities which will be eſtabliſhed by an Union, will raiſe her commerce beyond what the moſt ſanguine man has ever yet imagined. Cork, Waterford, and Limerick, will have a great proportion of the proviſion and other trade; but Dublin will be the great mart for the

import and export, particularly of manufactures. Dublin will have the great trade to the moſt thriving port, perhaps, in the world; I mean Liverpool. The trade of Ireland with England will be carried on with moſt ſecurity, eſpecially in time of war, between thoſe ports. Every article of foreign and Britiſh manufacture and produce, which Ireland does not furniſh or import immediately from the place of growth or of manufacture, ſhe may have from thence. Almoſt all the widely-extended inland navigation of England points to Liverpool, and may ſupply what is wanted to advantage. As Ireland imports but a ſmall proportion of her conſumption of Weſt-India articles directly from the place of growth, Dublin is well ſituated for ſupplies of thoſe articles from Briſtol and Liverpool in return for her exports to thoſe places. The corn trade will become a prodigious article, if the produce of the two

iſlands ſhould by an Union be put on the ſame footing as between two counties in England. The great inland navigations of Ireland will convey corn at a cheaper rate to Dublin, even from Limerick and Connaught, much cheaper than by a circuitous and precarious voyage by ſea. The canal tolls on corn and flour ſhould, in favour of Dublin, be purchaſed at the public expence, or greatly reduced; and the ſame ſhould be done in reſpect to the docks in the port of Dublin. This would facilitate the intercourſe between the two countries, and be a mutual advantage to them both; and would ultimately benefit Dublin much more than the reſidence of thoſe who would be ſent to the united Parliament. Dublin would become the warehouſe of the corn of that kingdom for the ſteady and certain corn markets of the North-weſt of Great Britain and the North of Ireland, where a very ſmall part of the conſumption of the

inhabitants can poſſibly be grown. The Engliſh farmer may at firſt be alarmed, when he hears, that Ireland will be conſidered as a part of England in reſpect to the corn-trade; but the advantages will be reciprocal, and the effect, which ſome may apprehend from an influx of corn more than ſufficient, cannot take place. Unfortunately we conſtantly import as much oats as Ireland can ſpare at any time, at preſent double the quantity, and that evil is increaſing rather than decreaſing. She is well ſituated to furniſh that part of Great Britain, which will always require a ſupply of that kind of corn, and the quantity of wheat ſhe is ever likely to ſpare will not be ſufficient to overload the Britiſh markets. It will be much leſs miſchievous to the growers of wheat in England to have the ports regularly and conſtantly open to the limited quantity that can come from Ireland, than to have them open to a glut of

corn from all parts of the world for three months certain; the moment the ſmalleſt proportion of the conſumption of this country is wanting, the moment its price becomes what is by no means extravagant, but on the contrary, while it is moderate, conſidering the increaſed expence of tillage. The opening of our ports for three months certain to all the world, when we only want a moderate quantity, may reduce the price of wheat ruinouſly low; but the comparatively ſmall quantity that could come from Ireland, would have no farther effect than ſupplying what may be actually wanted. When Ireland has a conſtantly open market in Great Britain for corn, it will prove the greateſt encouragement to her farmers to change their ſlovenly management. At preſent their corn is exported in ſo bad a ſtate, that it muſt meet the corn of other countries at market to great diſadvantage. When they have a

ſteady market, they will ſoon find the neceſſity of preparing and dreſſing their corn in a manner that will enable it to bear a competition with the corn of England.

It has been ſuggeſted, that the manufactures of Ireland, and particularly the linen trade, would ſuffer through the want of a reſident Parliament. The principal manufactures and commerce of Scotland are ſituated at a greater diſtance from London than thoſe of Ireland, and they became what they are ſince the Union of the Parliaments; yet there has never been the ſlighteſt complaint in reſpect to neceſſary protection and aſſiſtance from the Britiſh Parliament; and perhaps it may not improperly be obſerved in this place, that no diſadvantage whatever has ariſen to the affairs of Scotland in conſequence of her having only forty-five Members in the Britiſh Parliament, but they have been as well attended to

and as well managed as thoſe of England by upwards of five hundred Members, and the government of Scotland has been adminiſtered ſince Union as vigilantly and more impartially than before, and the ſame, in all probability, will be the caſe in reſpect to Ireland.

The objection to Union on the part of the Proteſtants of Ireland is unaccountable: they can hardly be ſaid to conſtitute a nation: they are an Engliſh colony governing upwards of three millions of Roman Catholics, or, at leaſt, ſix times their own number in a country acquired and maintained by Engliſh arms and treaſure, which colony never could have ſupported itſelf; and even in the laſt Summer would have been overwhelmed, unleſs protected by the ſame means by Engliſh power. They cannot diſdain that deſcription; many of them, I

am ſure, are ſenſible, that ſuch is their ſituation, and that their conſequence and ſecurity depend on the connexion with the Mother Country. In reſpect to the Roman Catholics, Union alone can make it ſafe to ſatisfy their claims. By Union, all that enmity, jealouſy, and contrariety of intereſt, which naturally ariſe between thoſe two unequal bodies, muſt ſoon ceaſe. The Proteſtants will loſe nothing; I am ſatisfied their object was not monopoly, but ſafety: they will be ſafe, and relieved from all apprehenſions, and may have a better tenantry, and more attached to their intereſt. The Roman Catholics may acquire all they can deſire; and I hope we ſhall never again hear of Proteſtant aſcendancy or Catholic emancipation, words which have been very inſidiouſly employed to the worſt purpoſes. On cool reflexion it will appear, that Ireland will not incur any

diſadvantage, but the advantages to be gained by her are the greateſt that can be conceived, and, in the firſt place, ſecurity and tranquillity, as it is reaſonable to ſuppoſe, that an identity of conſtitution and a due execution of the Laws, will produce the ſame effects in Ireland as they have done in Great Britain, and particularly in Scotland within this century. Till Union takes place, and not till then, will the theoretical independence of Ireland become practical. Ireland, in truth, is now actually dependent on England, through her diviſions, through her trade, and through her Conſtitution. Either the Proteſtants or the Catholics will depend on Engliſh ſupport. It has been ſhewn, that the trade of Ireland is abſolutely dependent on that of England; and the King of Great Britain being ſubject to Britiſh laws, in obeying him, and under the

neceſſary controul of his Miniſters, Ireland muſt in ſome ſort be dependent: but ſuppoſing two perfectly independent Legiſlatures within the ſame empire, they muſt always be conſidered as in an uncertain and perilous ſtate, mutually inconvenient to each other, and always cheriſhing diſcontent and jealouſy. If one Parliament exerts powers in oppoſition to thoſe of the other, what muſt be the conſequences? They are ſo obvious, that it would be an abuſe of time to ſtate them. We cannot reflect with much ſatisfaction on the only two inſtances which have occurred ſince the independence of the Iriſh Legiſlature, wherein the two Parliaments could act oppoſitely to each other. The rejection of the commercial propoſitions in 1785, on the part of Ireland, has not obtained the applauſe, even in that country, of the well-informed, and the conduct which was held on the

occaſion of appointing a Regency evinced a diſpoſition to riſk the miſchiefs which might be expected to ariſe from the claſhing of two independent Parliaments. In ſhort, if the ſort of independence which is claimed has any meaning, it leads to ſeparation—Union or ſeparation muſt take place; for it ſeems agreed on all ſides, that the countries cannot go on as they are.

Soon after the acceſſion of James the Firſt to the Thrones of theſe kingdoms, that wiſe Stateſman and Counſellor, Sir Francis Bacon, ſtrongly recommended an Union between England and Scotland. He clearly ſaw how faulty and precarious the fortunate junction of the two countries would be, if only ſupported by the circumſtance of having the ſame King. He propoſed a complete Union. He recommends highly the liberal ſyſtem of the

Romans, obſerving, that their naturaliza-tions were, in effect, perpetual mixtures, not only with perſons, but with cities and countries; and adds, that there never were any States that were good commixtures but the Romans. He alſo obſerves, that the conduct of other kingdoms has been dif-ferent, and conſequently the addition of farther empire and territory has been ra-ther matter of burden than of ſtrength, and kept alive the ſeeds of revolt and rebellion for many ages. And he adds, that Arragon was united to Caſtile by a marriage; but after an hundred years, a civil war com-menced in conſequence of the bad policy of not incorporating, but leaving it a ſeparate Government; and if he had lived as late as theſe times, he might have ſtated much ſtronger caſes. Machiavel alſo at-tributes the growth of the Roman Em-pire to the good policy in incorporating

ſo eaſily with ſtrangers; and Molyneux, the ſtrenuous aſſerter of the independence of the Iriſh Parliament, ſays, an Union on equal terms would be highly advantageous to Ireland; and the beſt means of enjoying that independence: and the Iriſh Parliament, in the beginning of this century, expreſſed a deſire for an entire Union. But the times were not ſo enlightened as they now are, and a narrow policy prevented the participation of thoſe liberal, fair, and equal terms, which are now offered to Ireland. The preſent Chief Baron of Ireland, one of the firſt conſtitutional authorities of that kingdom, and a ſucceſsful ſupporter of Iriſh independence in 1782, has aſſerted, that the independence of the Iriſh Parliament was moſt valuable, becauſe it would enable Ireland to treat for a Union upon fair terms.

The Union of Wales and Scotland with England, the Union of Bretagne, Dauphiny, and other provinces with France, the Union of the ſeveral kingdoms of Spain, all of which, while independent, were greatly prejudicial to each other, proved highly advantageous to the different countries and to the empires, in proportion to the completeneſs of legiſlative Union that took place; and the ſenſible Americans ſoon diſcovered how dangerous their ſituation would be, if they remained ſeparate independent States.

Every advantage that was expected, and more than was expected, has been derived from the Union of Scotland. No country was ever more diſturbed before and at the time. Nothing could tend more directly to ſeparation than the act of ſecurity which paſſed in the Parliament of Scotland juſt

before that event: a great proportion of the people of all ranks were as ill-diſpoſed towards England as the worſt diſpoſed of the Iriſh. The Clans were as much out of the reach of the law as any part of Ireland can be ſuppoſed to be. To carry fire and ſword from one diſtrict into another, was as much the diſpoſition of the Highlanders, as it has been lately of White-boys and Defenders in Ireland. The taſte and faſhion of the people were to be in a ſituation to commit hoſtilities, and the chief men of the country, inſtead of endeavouring to excite the induſtry of their dependants, only valued themſelves in proportion to the number of thoſe who were diſpoſed to follow them in arms. Notwithſtanding the Crowns of the two kingdoms had been annexed above an hundred years, a connexion with France was ſtill kept up, and the moſt dangerous intrigues carried on. I ſhall only add, that

although the cauſes or motives were not preciſely the ſame, the effects were; and many other inſtances of the diſorders, and of the reſemblance of the ſituation of Scotland at that time to the preſent ſtate of Ireland, might eaſily be ſtated, and that all thoſe circumſtances which diſturbed Scotland, as much as Ireland now is, have been done away by Union.

Nature has given many local advantages to Ireland. Union will give her a Conſtitution that is deemed the beſt; will give her tranquillity, wealth, and character; and money will be lent in Ireland, when ſettled, with as much confidence as in England. Thoſe who are now abſentees would find the advantage of reſiding there. Engliſhmen would riſk their perſons and property in that country, which, if not

immediately, will in time, become as civilized as Great Britain.

On the whole, it may be confidently pronounced, Union is moſt neceſſary, and will be moſt beneficial to Ireland. The plan ſeems formed for her peculiar, although I will not ſay for her excluſive, advantage, and as a partial friend I could not propoſe any thing more favourable for her. Yet it by no means follows, that the great advantages of Union to Ireland will be counterbalanced by diſadvantages to Great Britain, or that the gain of Ireland will be the loſs of Great Britain. In a long courſe of years, even if the meaſure of Union ſhould not take place, manufactures and trade will decline in ſome places when they redouble from various circumſtances in others: but poſſible local diſadvantages muſt not prevent the Legiſ-

lature from looking to the general good. It muſt be admitted, the proſperity of Ireland would be the proſperity of Great Britain. The inefficient ſtate of a part is a great loſs to the whole. The unſettled ſtate of that country is a general drawback from the proſperity of the empire, every part of which will find the advantage of that high degree of improvement which the aſſimilation of the two countries would effect. Great additional ſtrength, and ſecurity and general proſperity to Great Britain and to the Empire, will be the conſequence of Union, and the attention of the Executive Government would not hereafter, amidſt the diſtreſſes of war, and at the moment of the utmoſt peril, be diſtracted by conſpiracies and rebellion in Ireland.

Perhaps no circumſtance in the character

of the commercial and manufacturing intereſts, and of the people in general in Great Britain, gives a greater proof of their liberality and good ſenſe, than their acquieſcence on this occaſion in ſome poſſible ſacrifice of manufactures, of commerce, and of conſtitution, for the ſake of unity and tranquillity of empire. The energies of commerce ſurpaſs, and ſometimes contradict, the moſt plauſible calculations: and even in a commercial light England might be benefited by a great increaſe of manufactures and commerce in Ireland, inaſmuch as Ireland will be better enabled to pay for the many articles ſhe will continue to take from England. We all know that much commercial advantage cannot be obtained by trading with a nation which is not rich, eſpecially when the produce of the two countries is the ſame. The interchange of

commodities will animate trade; and no intelligent man will ſay, that the manufactures of England have decreaſed in conſequence of the great increaſe of manufactures in Scotland. But thoſe who will give themſelves the trouble of examining the queſtion will find, that the two countries are mutually benefited by the proſperous ſtate of their reſpective manufactures and commerce, and that competition encourages ſkill and induſtry, and promotes and enforces good regulations, and conſequent cheapneſs of manufacture. In reſpect to revenue, the empire will be highly benefited; for with the increaſe of wealth, there will be as great increaſe in the exciſe and cuſtoms; and when we enumerate the commercial and other advantages that would be derived from an Union, we ſhould not forget the miſchiefs that would be avoided, and that

the final termination of the antient alliances, the connexion, and the intrigues of France with Scotland, and all projects of ſeparation, were at laſt effected by the Union of Great Britain.

In reſpect to the incompetence of Parliament, it is difficult to believe that that objection is at this time ſeriouſly urged: if it is, it only convinces me there is great want of argument againſt the meaſure of Union. The argument would throw us back to firſt principles; that is, the diſſolution of Government, and to that jargon which has nearly ruined Europe. This doctrine was ably refuted at the time of the Union with Scotland; if it had not, it would ill ſuit the pretenſions of Ireland to eſtabliſh it.

If I ſhould be aſked, whether I am ſatis-

fied that Union will produce order and ſteady proſperity in Ireland, I ſhould anſwer, that I am. The ſame violence and machinations which exiſt at preſent to effect ſeparation might poſſibly be attempted at firſt; but when Ireland is irrevocably become a part of Great Britain, there would gradually and ſoon be an end of ſpeculations and conſpiracies. France would no longer ſpeculate on diſtinct governments and intereſts. The enemies of order would not be tempted by any proſpect of ſucceſs; they would recollect, that it is not Ireland alone, but the three kingdoms, that muſt be induced to ſacrifice or yield their Conſtitution: and, as was the caſe in Scotland, when the people of that country, who had been ſo averſe to Union, had taſted the ſweets of that meaſure, they became the moſt ſtrenuous ſupporters of it; inſomuch, that when it was the object to raiſe

a rebellion there, it was found that a declaration againſt Union would be unpopular and hurt the cauſe.

It may appear extraordinary, that ſo much ſhould be ſaid in this Houſe to prove the advantage of Union to Ireland; but the arguments are not ſo miſapplied as they may ſeem to be, they are, in truth, arguments to recommend the laying a propoſition before the Iriſh nation ſo beneficial, that I cannot doubt but a people of great abilities and capable of diſcernment, will, when the heat of their alarm has ſubſided, no longer refuſe to take into conſideration a plan which may be highly advantageous to every part of the empire; and unleſs the meaſure had been ill underſtood, the unreaſonable refuſal to liſten to any propoſition, could not have taken place.

In voting for the reſolutions, I do not mean to approve more than the *principle* of Union, to which no adequate objection has been ſtated. If we ſhould hereafter proceed to details, it will be then neceſſary to give all our attention, and exert our beſt powers in examining the articles; and above all, in preventing harm to the Conſtitution, taking care that we do not, with a levity and ſubmiſſion that ſeem to belong to the times, do any thing that may be unneceſſary for one country, and ſhould be highly dreaded by the other.

There has now been an opportunity of ſome experience, which it is to be hoped will promote the utmoſt liberality and candour in propoſing the meaſure, whenever the people of Ireland are found to be diſpoſed to accept it. Every man will agree with me in deprecating all idea of force or

threats, or the uſe of any means that are not perfectly fair and honourable.

To render Union ſatisfactory and permanent, it will not be ſufficient that it be merely acceded to by Parliament. The people at large muſt be reconciled to it; and that they may, is the wiſh neareſt my heart. It is for Ireland that I am moſt intereſted on this occaſion. Her deplorable condition demands it; for I am moſt ſeriouſly convinced the meaſure is *abſolutely neceſſary for her tranquillity, ſecurity, and welfare*. The bad effects of two ſeparate Parliaments within one empire, and the baneful idea of ſeparation, can be done away only by an Union; and until that event takes place, Ireland will never be ſettled, will always be diſturbed by the moſt miſchievous ſpeculations and in-

trigues, the ſport of parties, and of the enemies of England; ſhe will be a weakneſs as ſhe is at preſent, inſtead of a ſtrength to the empire.

THE END.

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